

Message Text

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64

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 IO-10 EB-06 /079 W

----- 107457

R 241332Z OCT 74

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3541

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG JOHANNESBURG 1106

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, SF

SUBJECT: JOHANNESBURG ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS COVERAGE OF NSSM-39

REF: EMBASSY CAPE TOWN'S 657

1. "RAND DAILY MAIL" AND "STAR" HAVE FEATURED WASHINGTON-DATELINED STORIES BY RICHARD WALKER AND KEN OWEN AND HAVE ALSO PRINTED EDITORIALS. FULL TEXTS OF EDITORIALS FOLLOW:

2. "RAND DAILY MAIL" OCTOBER 23: BEGIN UNDERLINE "AFTER THE 'LEAK'... END UNDERLINE

A. "A COMFORT TO WHITES, A SELLOUT FOR BLACKS, SHEER ECONOMIC SELF-INTEREST--WHATEVER ONE'S INTERPRETATION OF THE UNDERCOVER UNITED STATES POLICY ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, MERE EXPOSURE OF IT TO THE LIGHT OF PUBLICITY WILL VERY LIKELY CAUSE IT TO MUTATE NOW, AND NOT TO OUR ADVANTAGE. A POLICY THAT WAS EVIDENTLY KEPT SECRET BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF 'SELLING' IT TO AMERICANS OR INTERNATIONALLY, IS HARDLY LIKELY TO SURVIVE INTACT UNDER PUBLIC SCRUTINY.

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B. "ACCORDING TO REPORTS, PRESIDENT NIXON PLUMPED IN 1970 FOR PRAG-

MATISM IN DEALING WITH THIS END OF AFRICA. IN WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A 'TILT' TOWARDS WHITES, HE ADOPTED THE KISSINGER COURSE OF MAINTAINING LINKS WHILE ATTEMPTING TO USE THEM TO ENCOURAGE POLITICAL CHANGE. THE POLICY WAS OBVIOUSLY DICTATED BY A SIMPLE WEIGHING OF EXISTING REALITIES: ON THE ONE HAND, THE STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC VALUE OF SOUTH AFRICA; ON THE OTHER, INCREASING BLACK TRADE AND THE THE POLITICAL UNPOPULARITY OF THE ASSOCIATION. SUCH A POLICY IS ALWAYS SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGE SHOULD THE BALANCE OF DISADVANTAGE CHANGE, BUT IN THE SHORT TERM IT MADE ECONOMIC SENSE--AND, INCIDENTALLY, PROVIDED A CERTAIN COMFORT TO WHITE GOVERNMENTS.

C. "NOW A 'LEAK' OF SECRET DOCUMENTS HAS REVEALED ALL, MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT TO PLAY THE GAME. WHICH RAISES THE INTRIGUING QUESTION OF HOW AND WHY THE 'LEAK' OCCURRED AT ALL.

D. "IT COULD, OF COURSE, HAVE COME FROM AN OPPONENT ANXIOUS TO EMBARRASS THE NIXON-FORD ADMINISTRATION ITSELF. FINDING THE BALANCE OF PRAGMATISM BEGINNING TO TIP AWAY FROM THE WHITE SOUTH, THE UNITED STATES MIGHT HAVE FOUND IT NECESSARY TO WARN SOUTH AFRICA THAT THE CONDITION FOR CONTINUED ASSOCIATION IS THAT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE AMERICAN BARGAIN IS FULFILLED TOO. AND THAT IS THAT VISIBLE CHANGE DOES OCCUR HERE--QUICKLY. THAT IS ABOUT THE ONLY SELLING POINT THE POLICY HAS FOR AMERICA AT LARGE."

3. "STAR" OCTOBER 22: BEGIN UNDERLINE "NSSM 39 END UNDERLINE

A. "THERE IS BOTH GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS FOR SOUTH AFRICA IN NSSM 39, THAT TOP-LEVEL, TOP-SECRET AMERICAN ASSESSMENT OF OUR STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE (OR OTHERWISE) TO AMERICA.

B. "IT IS OVERSIMPLIFYING THE REPORT TO SAY THAT THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED TO WRITE US OFF AS AN EMBARRASSING LIABILITY. ON THE CONTRARY WASHINGTON RETAINS A DIRECT MILITARY INTEREST IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AS A BARRIER AGAINST COMMUNIST EXPANSION.

C. "THAT IS THE GOOD NEWS. THE BAD LIES IN THE CLINICALLY SOMBRE VIEW WHICH DR. KISSINGER'S PLANNERS TAKE OF OUR PROSPECTS FOR RACIAL PEACE. THEY DIFFER ON THE SCALE OF THE RACIAL ERUPTION WHICH THEY SEE IN STORE FOR US HERE AND ON ITS TIMING. YET THEY UNCLASSIFIED

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SERIOUSLY FEAR A WORSENING SITUATION WHICH WILL GIVE COMMUNISM ITS BIG OPPORTUNITY.

D. "AND THE HOPE FOR PREVENTING THAT, IN THEIR VIEW, LIES IN A GREAT ACCELERATION IN OUR RATE OF POLITICAL CHANGE.

E. "NSSM 39 WAS COMPILED IN 1969. SINCE THEN SOUTH AFRICA HAS AT LEAST MADE A START ON A GOOD MANY OF THE DOMESTIC REFORMS IT

SUGGESTS. BUT SINCE THEN, TOO, THERE HAVE BEEN DRAMATIC NEW
EVENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THEY MAKE THE NEED FOR CHANGE EVEN
MORE URGENT."
GUTHRIE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974JOHANN01106
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740304-0394
From: JOHANNESBURG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741020/aaaaaqyo.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: EMBASSY CAPE TOWN'S 657
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 MAR 2002 by chappeld>; APPROVED <11 FEB 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JOHANNESBURG ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS COVERAGE OF NSSM-39
TAGS: PFOR, US, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005